79. The symbol "→" is written instead of these bracketed words in the manuscript.

80. Here is where the tape of the lecture as delivered in Annapolis breaks off (cf. note 29). Accordingly, we have only Professor Strauss's manuscript of the remainder of the lecture.

81. Beneath the line here there are added two distinct groups of words in the manuscript. The first, which begins under the word "Thing-in-itself", consists of two lines, one underneath the other. The top line is "(Kant)—nature 'an sich' unknowable." The bottom line appears to be "but for Heidegger and Nietzsche: no Beyond or Without." (This line, and especially the word which we have interpreted as "for," is difficult to read, and perhaps we are in error about it.) The second group of words, which is found underneath the words "philosophy of nature (Hegel)" is "nature as mind in its Anderssein."

82. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following two sentences, which are written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript. "Heidegger has something to do with *mysticism* if mysticism is the discovery of the life of the deity in the depths of the human heart. But the mystery which Heidegger claims to have discovered is meant to be deeper, and less based on questionable presuppositions, than the mysteries of God."

83. The word ",Ding" (with the preceding comma) is written underneath the word "Ware" in the manuscript.

84. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following sentence, which is written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript. "In this way, and only in this way, Heidegger upholds the universalist—the trans-national or trans-cultural—intention of philosophy."

85. Here, at the end of Professor Strauss's manuscript, occurs the marginal notation "*Continue* 4b," to which we referred in note 29, and which directs us back to the portion of the lecture that we have omitted so far. At the beginning of this portion of the lecture, a new paragraph begins with the following sentence, which has been crossed out: "However this may be, can one answer the question of the *worth* of what Socrates stood for, nay, can one properly formulate it, if one does not know in the first place *what* it is for which he stood." As the reader will notice, this sentence is nearly the same as the one that immediately precedes the marginal notation, "*Continue* 4b." Accordingly, in turning now to this omitted section, we have chosen not to begin a new paragraph.

86. No indention in the manuscript, although the previous line appears to be the end of a paragraph.

87. It is possible that Professor Strauss wrote the word "framed" here instead of "formed."

88. "one" added by the editors.

89. The words "than conversations dealing with *ti esti*" are added beneath the line in the manuscript.

90. "are" added by the editors.

The problem of Socrates

Leo Strauss

"The problem of Socrates" was delivered as a lecture on April 17, 1970, on the Annapolis campus of St. John's College. Professor Strauss's daughter, Professor Jenny Clay, of the Department of Classics at the University of Virginia, has generously made available to the editors a copy of the manuscript. Also, a tape recording of the lecture in the St. John's College library in Annapolis was available to the editors, as were copies of an anonymous transcription of that tape. Unfortunately, the tape is broken off after about forty-five minutes, with nearly half of the manuscript still unread, and the transcription also ends where the tape does. Still, the transcription, as corrected by the editors on the basis of the tape itself, offers a version of the first part of the lecture which differs from the manuscript in a number of places and which sometimes appears to be superior to it. Thus, we have chosen to give the recorded version almost equal weight with the manuscript as a basis for our published text. When the lecture as delivered merely contains a word or words that are not in the manuscript, we have included these in brackets. In the other cases where the two authorities differ and where we have preferred the version in the lecture as delivered, we have again included it in brackets, but in these cases we have also included the manuscript version in a note. In the case of those discrepancies where we have preferred the manuscript version, we have included it in the text without brackets, and we have included the oral version in a note. All italics and paragraphs are based on the manuscript. A note indicates where the tape is broken off, and after this point we are of course compelled to rely on the manuscript alone. We have preserved Professor Strauss's punctuation to the extent that we thought possible without sacrificing clarity. In those few cases where we have made a change on our own (apart from adding or subtracting a comma), we have so indicated in a note. We have been compelled to substitute transliterations for Professor Strauss's Greek words and phrases, all of which appear in the original Greek in the manuscript. Finally, we are grateful to Dr. Heinrich Meier for his generous help in deciphering Professor Strauss's handwriting.

A small portion of this lecture has been published previously, incorporated within a different lecture and in a somewhat modified form, in The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss

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(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989 [© 1989 by The University of Chicago]), pp. 44–46.

[I was told that the local paper has announced that I lecture tonight on "The problems of Socrates." This was an engaging printing error; for there is more than one problem of Socrates, in the first place, the problem with which Socrates was concerned. But one could say, the problem with which Socrates was concerned may be of no concern to us, that it may not be relevant. Therefore—after all there are so many things which concern us so much more obviously and urgently than the problem with which Socrates was concerned. But we receive an answer why we should be concerned with Socrates' problem by listening to the man from whom I took the title of this lecture, and which, as far as I remember, was coined by him.][1] "The problem of Socrates" is the first, immediately revealing title of a section in Nietzsche's *Dawn of Idols*, one of his last publications. Socrates and Plato, we hear, were décadents. More precisely, Socrates was a décadent who belonged to the lowest stratum of the common people, to the riff-raff. [I quote:] "Everything is exaggerated, buffo, caricature in him, everything is at the same time concealed, rich in afterthoughts, subterranean." The enigma of Socrates is the idiotic equation of reason, virtue and happiness—an equation opposed to all instincts of the earlier Greeks, of [the] Greek health and nobility. The key is supplied by Socrates' discovery of dialectics, i.e. the quest for reasons. The earlier and[2] high-class Greeks disdained to seek for, and to present, the reasons of their conduct. To abide by authority, by the command either of the gods or of themselves, was for them simply a matter of good manners. Only those people have recourse to dialectics who have no other means for getting listened to and respected. It is a kind of *revenge* which the low-born take of the high-born. "The dialectician leaves it to his adversary to prove that he is not an idiot. He enrages and at the same time makes helpless." Socrates *fascinated* because he discovered in dialectics a new form of *agōn*, [of contest]; he thus won over the noble youth of Athens and among them above all Plato. In an age when the instincts had lost their ancient surety, and [were disintegrating][3], one needed a non-instinctual tyrant; this tyrant was[4] reason. Yet the cure belongs as much to décadence as the illness.

When speaking of the earlier Greeks, Nietzsche thinks also of the philosophers, the pre-Socratic philosophers[5], especially Heraclitus. This does not mean that he agreed with Heraclitus. One reason why he did not was that he, like all philosophers, lacked the [so-called] "historical sense." Nietzsche's cure for all Platonism and hence Socratism was at all times Thucydides who had the courage to face reality without illusion and to seek reason *in reality*, and not in ideas. In Thucydides the sophistic culture, i.e. the realistic culture, comes to its full[6] expression.

The section on the problem of Socrates in the *Dawn of Idols* is only a relic of Nietzsche's first publication, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, which he disowned to some extent later on, one reason being that he had understood [in that early work] Greek tragedy in the light or the darkness of Wagnerian music, and he had come to see that Wagner was a décadent [of the first order]. In spite of this and other defects Nietzsche's first work delineates his future life work with amazing clarity. [I will therefore say something about that.]

Nietzsche paints Socrates as "the single turning point and vortex of so-called world-history."[7] [Nietzsche's][8] concern was not merely theoretical; he was concerned with the future of Germany or the future of Europe—a human future that must surpass the highest that [has ever been achieved][9] before. The peak of man hitherto is that manner of life that found its expression in Greek tragedy, especially in Aeschylean tragedy. The "tragic" understanding of the world was rejected and destroyed by Socrates, who therefore is "the most questionable phenomenon of antiquity," a man of more than human size: a demigod. Socrates [in brief] is the first theoretical man, the incarnation of the spirit of science, radically un-artistic and a-music. "In the person of Socrates the belief in the comprehensibility of nature and in the universal healing power of knowledge has first come to light." He is the prototype of the rationalist and therefore of the optimist, for optimism is not merely the belief that the world is the best possible world, but also the belief that the world can be made into the best of all imaginable worlds, or that the evils which belong to the best possible world can be rendered harmless by knowledge: thinking can not only fully *understand* being but can even *correct* it; *life* can be *guided* by science; the living gods of myth can be replaced by a deus ex machina, i.e. the forces of nature as known and used in the service of "higher egoism".[10] Rationalism is optimism, since it is the belief that reason's power is unlimited and essentially beneficent or that science can solve all riddles and loosen all chains. Rationalism is optimism, since the belief in causes depends on the belief in ends or since rationalism presupposes the belief in the initial or final supremacy of the good. The full and ultimate consequences of the change effected or represented by Socrates appear only in the contemporary West: in the belief in universal enlightenment and therewith in the earthly happiness of all within a universal society, in utilitarianism, liberalism, democracy, pacifism, and socialism. Both these consequences and the insight into the essential limitations of science have shaken "Socratic culture" to its foundation: "the time of Socratic man has gone." There is then hope for a future beyond the peak of pre-Socratic culture, for a *philosophy* of the future that is no longer merely theoretical [as all philosophy hitherto was], but knowingly based on acts of the will[11] or on decision.

Nietzsche's attack on *Socrates* is an attack on *reason*: reason, the celebrated liberator from all prejudices, proves itself to be based on a prejudice, and the most *dangerous* of all prejudices: the prejudice stemming from décadence. In other words, reason, which waxes so easily and so highly indignant about the demanded sacrifice of the intellect, rests *itself* on the sacrifice of the intel-

lect.[12]—This criticism was made by a man who stood at the opposite pole of all obscurantism and fundamentalism.

One would therefore misunderstand the utterances of Nietzsche on Socrates which I quoted or to which I referred if one did not keep in mind the fact that Socrates exerted a life-long fascination on Nietzsche. The most beautiful document of this fascination is the penultimate aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil*, perhaps the most beautiful passage in Nietzsche's [whole] work. I do not dare attempt to translate it. Nietzsche does not *mention* Socrates there, but [Socrates][13] *is* there. Nietzsche says there[14] that the gods too philosophize, thus obviously contradicting Plato's *Symposium*[15] according to which the gods do *not* philosophize, do not *strive* for wisdom, but *are* wise. In other words, [the] gods, as Nietzsche understands them, are not entia perfectissima [most perfect beings]. I add only a few[16] points. The serious opposition of Nietzsche to Socrates can also be expressed as follows: Nietzsche replaces *erōs* by the will to power—a striving which has a goal beyond striving by a striving which has no such goal. In other words, philosophy as it was hitherto is likened to the moon—and philosophy of the future is like the sun; the former is contemplative and [sends][17] only borrowed light, is dependent on creative acts outside of it, preceding it; the latter is creative because it is animated by conscious will to power. Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is "a book for all and none" [as it says on the title page]; Socrates calls on *some*.—I add one more point of no small importance. In the Preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, when taking issue with Plato and therewith with Socrates, Nietzsche says as it were in passing: "Christianity is Platonism for the people."

The profoundest interpreter and at the same time the profoundest *critic* of Nietzsche is Heidegger. He is Nietzsche's profoundest interpreter [precisely] *because* he is his profoundest critic. The direction which his criticism takes may be indicated as follows. In his[18] *Zarathustra* Nietzsche had spoken of the spirit of revenge as animating all earlier philosophy; the spirit of revenge is however in the last analysis concerned with revenge on *time*, and therewith it is[19] the attempt to *escape* from time to eternity, to an eternal being. Yet Nietzsche also taught *eternal* return. For Heidegger there is no longer eternity in any sense or even sempiternity in any relevant sense. Despite of this or rather because of this[20], he preserved Nietzsche's[21] condemnation or critique of Plato as the originator of what came to be modern science and therewith modern technology. But through Heidegger's radical transformation of Nietzsche, Socrates almost completely disappeared. I remember only one statement of Heidegger's on Socrates: he calls him the *purest* of [all][22] Western thinkers, while making it clear that "purest" is something very different from "greatest." Is he insufficiently aware of the Odysseus in Socrates? [Perhaps.][23] But he surely sees the connection between Socrates' singular purity and the fact that he did not write.

To come back to Heidegger's tacit denial of eternity, that denial implies that there is no way in which thought can transcend time, can transcend History; all thought belongs to, depends on, something more fundamental which thought cannot master; all thought *belongs* radically to an epoch, a culture, a folk. This view is of course not peculiar to Heidegger; it emerged in the 19th century and today has become for many people a truism.[24] But Heidegger has thought it through more radically than anyone else. Let us call this view "historicism" and define it as follows: historicism is a view according to which all thought is based on absolute presuppositions which vary from epoch to epoch, from culture to culture, which are not questioned and cannot be questioned in the situation to which they belong and which they constitute. This view is not refuted by the "objectivity" of science, by the fact that science transcends, or breaks down, all cultural barriers; for the science which does this is *modern Western* science, the child or stepchild of *Greek* science. Greek science was rendered possible by the Greek *language*, a *particular* language; the Greek language [suggested][25] those insights, divinations or prejudices which make science possible. To give [a simple][26] example, science means knowledge of all beings (*panta ta onta*), a thought [inexpressible in original Hebrew or Arabic;][27] [28]the medieval Jewish and Arabic philosophers had to invent an artificial term to make possible the entrance of Greek science, i.e. of science. The Greeks, and therewith in particular Socrates and Plato, lacked the awareness of history, the historical consciousness. This is the most popular and least venomous expression of why in particular Socrates and Plato have become altogether questionable for both Nietzsche and Heidegger, and so many of our contemporaries. This is the most simple explanation of why Socrates has become a problem, why there *is* a problem of Socrates.

[29]This does not mean that the anti-Socratic position which I have tried to delineate is unproblematic.[30] It would be unproblematic, if we could take for granted the [so-called] historical consciousness, if the object of the historical consciousness, History [with a capital H], had simply been *discovered*. But perhaps History is a problematic *interpretation* of phenomena which could be interpreted differently, which *were* interpreted differently in former times and especially by Socrates and his descendants. [I will illustrate the fact starting from a simple example. Xenophon, a pupil of Socrates, wrote a history called *Hellenica*, Greek history. This work begins abruptly with the expression "Thereafter." Thus Xenophon cannot indicate what the intention of this work is.][31] From the beginning of another work of his (the *Symposium*) we infer[32] that the *Hellenica* is devoted to the serious actions of gentlemen; hence the actions of those notorious non-gentlemen, the tyrants, do not strictly speaking belong [to history, and are appropriately treated by Xenophon in excursuses.][33] More important[ly]: the *Hellenica*[34] also *ends*, as far as possible,[35] with Thereafter—what we call History is for Xenophon a sequence of Thereafters, in each of which *tarachē* [confusion] rules. Socrates is also a gentleman, but a gentleman of a different kind; his gentlemanship consists in [raising and answering the question 'What is' regarding the various human things. But these 'What is'es

are unchangeable,][36] and in no way in a state of confusion. As a consequence, the[37] *Hellenica* is only *political* history. The primacy of political history is still recognized: a "historian" still means a *political* historian, [unless we add an adjective, like economic, art, and so on][38]. Still, modern history is, or is based upon, *philosophy* of history. Philosophy of history begins with Vico—[but Vico's][39] new science [as he called it] is a doctrine of natural right, i.e. a *political* doctrine. However this may be, modern history [in the form in which we know it] deals with *all* human activities and thoughts, with the whole of [what is called] "culture." There is no "culture" in [Greek][40] thought but [there are for instance arts, including the art of moneymaking and the imitative arts][41] and [opinions,] *doxai*, especially about the highest (the gods); these [opinions][42] are therefore the highest in what *we* would call "a culture". These [opinions][42] differ from nation to nation and they may undergo changes *within* nations. Their objects[43] have the cognitive status of *nomizomena*, of things owing their being to being *held*,[44] frozen results of abortive reasonings which are *declared* to be sacred. They are [to borrow from a Platonic simile] the ceilings of caves. What we call History would be the succession or simultaneity of caves. The [caves, the] ceilings are *nomōi* [by convention] which is understood in contra-distinction to *phusei* [by nature]. In the modern centuries there emerged a new kind of *natural* right [doctrine][45] which is based on the devaluation of nature; Hobbes' state of nature is the best known example. Nature is here only a negative standard: that from which one should move *away*. On the basis of this, the law of reason or the moral law [as it was called] ceased to be *natural* law: nature is in *no* way a standard. This is the necessary, although not sufficient, condition of the historical consciousness. The historical consciousness itself may be characterized from [this earlier][46] point of view as follows: History, the object of the historical consciousness, is a sequence of *nomoi*, *phusis* being understood as one *nomos* among many—*nomos* has absorbed *phusis*. Heidegger tries to understand *phusis* as related, not to *phuein* (to grow) but to *phaos-phōs* (light)—"to grow" is for him above all man's being rooted in a human past, in a tradition, and creatively transforming that tradition.[47] cf. also Nietzsche's *Jenseits* aphorism 188.[48]

Let me restate the issue in somewhat different terms as follows. The human species consists *phusei* of *ethnē*. This is due partly directly to *phusis*[49] (different races, the size and structure of the surface of the earth) and partly to *nomos* (customs and languages). Every philosopher *belongs* essentially to this or that *ethnos* but as [a] philosopher he must transcend it—. The prospect of a miraculous abolition or overcoming of the essential particularism for all men was held out in somewhat different ways by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. A *non*-miraculous overcoming was visualized in modern times by means of the conquest of nature and the universal recognition of a purely[50] *rational nomos* [law], so that only the difference of languages remains [which even Stalin recognized as important]. In reaction to this levelling, which seemed to deprive human life

of its depth, philosophers[51] began to *prefer* the particular (the local and temporal) to *any* universal instead of merely *accepting* the particular. To illustrate this by what is probably[52] the best-known example: they replaced the rights of man by the rights of Englishmen.

According to historicism every man belongs essentially and completely to a historical world, [and he][53] cannot understand another historical world exactly as it [understood or understands][54] itself—[he necessarily understands][55] it *differently* than it [understands][56] itself. Understanding it *better* than it understood itself is of course altogether impossible [and only believed in by very simplistic anthropologists]. *Yet* Heidegger characterizes [all earlier philosophers] all earlier philosophic thought by "oblivion of Sein," of the ground of grounds: [which means] in the decisive respect he claims to understand [the earlier philosophers][57] *better* than they understood themselves.

This difficulty is not peculiar to Heidegger. It is essential to all forms of historicism. For historicism must assert that it is an insight surpassing all earlier insights, since it claims to bring to light the true character of all earlier insights: it puts them in their place, if one may put it so crudely. At the same time [historicism][58] asserts that insights are [functions of times or periods][59]; it suggests therefore implicitly that the absolute insight—the historicist insight—belongs to the absolute time, the absolute moment [in history]; but it must avoid even the semblance of raising such a claim for our time, or for *any* time; for this would be tantamount to putting an end to History, i.e. to significant time (cf. Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche).[60] In other words: the historical process is not rational; each epoch has *its* absolute presuppositions; [in the formula of Ranke] (all epochs are equally immediate to God); but historicism has brought to light this very fact, i.e. the *truly* absolute presupposition.

The historicist insight remains true for all times, for if that insight were forgotten at some future time, this would merely mean a relapse into an oblivion in which man has always lived in the past. Historicism is an eternal verity.

[That of course is impossible.] [61]According to Heidegger there are no eternal verities: eternal verities would presuppose the eternity or sempiternity of the human race (*Sein und Zeit* 227–230; *Einführung in die Metaphysik* 64)[60]. Heidegger *knows* that [the human race][62] is *not* eternal or sempiternal. Is not this *knowledge*, the knowledge that the human race had an *origin*,[63] a *cosmological* insight, if not *the* basis,[64] at least basic, for Heidegger?

[65]*The* ground of all beings, and especially of man, is [said to be] Sein. "Sein" would be translated in the case of every writer other than Heidegger by "being"; but for Heidegger everything depends on the radical difference between being understood as verbal noun and being understood as participle, and in English the verbal noun is undistinguishable from the participle. I shall therefore use the German terms after having translated them once into Greek, Latin and French: Sein is *einai*, esse, être; Seiendes is *on*, ens, étant. Sein is not Seiendes; but in every understanding of Seiendes we tacitly presuppose that

we understand Sein. One is tempted to say in Platonic language that Seiendes *is* only by participating in Sein but in that Platonic understanding Sein would be a Seiendes.

What does Heidegger mean by Sein? One can *begin* [at least I can begin] to understand it in the following manner. Sein cannot be explained by Seiendes. For instance, causality cannot be explained causally → Sein takes the place of the categories [surely in the Kantian sense]. This change is necessary because the categories, the systems of categories, the absolute presuppositions change from epoch to epoch; this change is not progress or rational—the change of the categories cannot be explained by, or on the basis of, one particular system of categories; yet we could not speak of change if there [were] not something lasting *in* the change; that lasting which is responsible for [the] most fundamental change [fundamental thought] is Sein: Sein [as he puts it] "gives" or "sends" in different epochs a different understanding of Sein and therewith of "everything."

This is misleading insofar as it suggests that Sein is *inferred, only* inferred. But of Sein we know through *experience* of Sein; that experience presupposes [however] a *leap*; that leap was not made by the earlier philosophers and *therefore* their thought is characterized by oblivion of Sein. They thought only of and about Seiendes. Yet they could not have thought of and about Seiendes except on the basis of some awareness of Sein. But they paid no attention to it—this failure was due, not to any negligence of theirs, but to Sein itself.

The key to Sein is one particular manner of Sein, the Sein of *man*. Man *is* project: everyone is what (or rather who) he is by virtue of the exercise of his freedom, his choice of a determinate ideal of existence, his project (or his failure to do so). But man is finite: the range of his fundamental choices is limited by his situation which he has *not* chosen: man is a project which is *thrown* somewhere (geworfener Entwurf)[60]. The leap through which Sein is experienced is primarily the awareness-acceptance of being thrown, of finiteness, the abandonment of every thought of a railing, a support. (Existence must be understood in contradistinction to insistence.)[66] Earlier philosophy and especially Greek philosophy was oblivious of Sein precisely because it was not based on *that* experience. Greek philosophy was guided by an idea of Sein according to which Sein means to be "at hand," to be present, and therefore Sein in the highest sense to be *always* present, to *be always*. Accordingly they and their successors understood the soul as substance, as a thing—and not as the self which, if truly a self, if authentic [and not mere drifting or shallow], [is based on the awareness-acceptance of the][67] project as thrown. No human life that is not[68] mere drifting or shallow is possible without a project, without an ideal of existence and dedication to it. "Ideal of existence" [this] takes the place of "respectable opinion of the good life"; but opinion points to knowledge, whereas "ideal of existence" implies that in this respect there is no knowledge [possible] but only—what is much higher than knowledge, i.e. knowledge of what is—project, decision.

The ground of all beings, and especially of man, is Sein—this ground of grounds is coeval with man and therefore also not eternal or sempiternal.[69] But if this is so, Sein cannot be the *complete* ground of man: the *emergence* of man, in contradistinction to the *essence* of man, [would require][70] a ground different from Sein. [In other words] Sein is not the ground of the *That*. But is not the That, and precisely the That, Sein? If we try to understand anything radically, we come up against facticity, irreducible facticity. If we try to understand the That of man, the fact that the human race *is*, by tracing it to its causes, to its conditions, we shall find that the whole effort is directed by a specific understanding of Sein—by[71] an understanding which is given or sent by Sein.[72] The condition[s] of man [in this view are][73] comparable to Kant's Thing-in-itself, of which one cannot say anything and in particular not whether it contains anything [sempiternal].[74] Heidegger also replies as follows[75]: one cannot speak of anything being prior to man in *time*; for time is or happens only while man is; authentic or primary time is and arises only in man; cosmic time, the time measurable by chronometers, is secondary or derivative and can therefore not be appealed to, or made use of, in fundamental philosophic considerations. This argument reminds of the medieval argument according to which the temporal finiteness of the world is compatible with God's eternity and unchangeability because, time being dependent on motion, there cannot have been time when there was no motion. But yet it [seems that it] is meaningful and even indispensable to speak of "prior to the creation of the world" and in the case of Heidegger of "prior to the emergence of man."

It seems thus that one cannot avoid the question as to what is responsible for the emergence of man and of Sein, or of what brings them out of nothing. For: ex nihilo nihil fit [out of nothing nothing comes into being]. This is apparently questioned by Heidegger: [he says] ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit [out of nothing every being as being comes out]. This could remind one of the Biblical doctrine of creation [out of nothing]. But Heidegger has no place for[76] the Creator-God. [This would suggest, things come into being out of nothing and through nothing, ex nihilo et a nihilo].[77] This is [of course] not literally asserted nor literally denied by Heidegger. But *must* it not be considered in its literal meaning?

Kant found "nowhere even an attempt of a proof" of ex nihilo nihil fit.[78] His own proof establishes this principle as necessary—but only for rendering possible any possible experience (in contradistinction to [what he called] the Thing-in-itself)—he gives a *transcendental* legitimation [of ex nihilo nihil fit. The transcendental deduction in its turn points to the][79] primacy of practical reason. [In the same spirit][79] Heidegger[80]: "die Freiheit ist der Ursprung des Satzes vom Grunde."

Accordingly Heidegger does speak of the origin of man—he says that it is a mystery—what is the status of the reasoning leading to this sensible result? It follows directly from these 2 premises: 1) Sein cannot be explained by Seiendes—cf. causality cannot be explained causally—2) man is *the* being

constituted by Sein—indissolubly linked with it → man participates in the inexplicability of Sein. The difficulty re: the origin of man which was encountered within biology (See Portmann) was only an illustration, not a proof.

Heidegger seems to have succeeded in getting rid of *phusis* without having left open a back door to a Thing-in-itself and without being in need of a philosophy of nature (Hegel).[81] One could say that he succeeded in this at the price of the unintelligibility of Sein. Lukács, the most intelligent of the Western Marxists, using the sledgehammer which Lenin had used against empirio-criticism, spoke of mystification.[82] Lukács only harmed himself by not learning from Heidegger. He prevented himself from seeing that Heidegger's understanding of the contemporary world is more comprehensive and more profound than Marx's (Gestell—Ware, Ding)[83] or that Marx raised a claim surpassing by far the claim of him who claimed to have sold the Brooklyn bridge. In all important respects Heidegger does not make things obscurer than they are.

Heidegger tries to deepen the understanding of what thinking is by reflecting on the German word for thinking. To this procedure he makes the objection that a German word obviously belongs to a particular language, and thinking is something universal; hence one cannot bring to light what thinking is by reflecting on one word of a particular language. He draws the conclusion that there remains here a problem. Which means that historicism even in its Heideggerian form contains for him a problem. For him a solution cannot lie in a return to the supra-temporal or eternal but only in something historical: in a meeting of the most different ways of understanding life and the world, a meeting of East and West—not of course of the opinion pollsters or opinion leaders on both sides but of those who, most deeply rooted in their past, reach out beyond an apparently unbridgeable gulf.[84] If this is reasonable, our first task would be the one in which we are already engaged—the task of understanding the Great *Western* Books.—

I began by saying that Socrates has become a problem—that the worth, the validity, of what he stood for has become a problem. But the question of the *worth* of what Socrates stood for, presupposes that we know already *what* it was for which he stood.—[85] This second, or primary, question leads to the problem of Socrates in another sense of the expression, to the *historical* problem. *This* problem of Socrates stems indeed from the fact that Socrates did not write and that we depend therefore for our knowledge of him, i.e. of his thought, on mediators who were at the same time transformers. These mediators are Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle. Aristotle did not know Socrates except through reports oral or written. In fact, what he says about Socrates is a restatement of what *Xenophon* said. Aristophanes, Xenophon and Plato knew Socrates himself. Of these 3 men the only one who showed by deed that he was willing to be a historian, was Xenophon. This establishes a prima facie case in favor of Xenophon. As for Plato, I remember having heard it said that "we know today" that some of his dialogues are early and hence more

Socratic than the later ones. But for Plato it was a matter of complete indifference which implications or presuppositions of the Socratic question "what is virtue" were known to Socrates and which were not: so much was he dedicated to Socrates' question; so much did he forget himself. It is much wiser to say of the Platonic Socrates, with Nietzsche, jocularly and even frivolously, *prosthe Platōn, opithen te Platōn, messē te Chimaira*. At any rate, the Platonic Socrates is less *eusunoptos* than is the Xenophontic Socrates. I shall limit myself therefore to the Xenophontic Socrates. But this is not feasible if we do not remind ourselves of the Socrates of Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

[86]That Socrates was manifestly guilty of the two stock charges made against the philosophers at the time: 1) that they did not believe in the gods, especially the gods of the city, and 2) that they made the weaker argument the stronger, that they made the *Adikos Logos* triumph over the *Dikaios Logos*. For he engaged in 2 activities: 1) in *phusiologia*, the study of the compulsions by which especially heavenly phenomena come about, and 2) in *rhētorikē*. The connection between the 2 pursuits is not immediately clear, for the Aristophanean Socrates was altogether unpolitical and rhetoric seems to be in the service of politics. Yet: *phusiologia* liberates from all prejudices, in particular the belief in the gods of the city; and this liberation is frowned upon by the city; the philosopher-physiologist needs therefore rhetoric in order to defend himself, his unpopular activity, before the law courts; his defense is the highest achievement of his skill to make the *Adikos Logos* triumph over the *Dikaios Logos*. Needless to say, he can use that skill also for other, in a sense lower purposes, like defrauding debtors. The Aristophanean Socrates is a man of the utmost continence and endurance. This fact alone shows that the *Adikos Logos* who appears on the stage is not *Socrates' Adikos Logos*, at least not in its pure, ultimate form. *This Adikos Logos* is to the effect that the true community is the community of the knowers, and not the *polis*, or that the knowers have obligations only toward one another: the ignoramuses have as little rights as madmen. The knower is much closer to another knower than he is to his family. The family is constituted by paternal authority and the prohibition against incest—by the *prohibition* against killing one's father and marrying one's mother. The prohibition against incest, the obligation of exogamy, calls for the expansion of the family into the *polis*, an expansion which is necessary in the first place because the family is not able to defend itself. But the 2 prohibitions would lack the necessary force if there were no gods. Socrates questions all this: *oud' esti Zeus*. He thus subverts the *polis*, and yet he could not lead his life *without* the *polis*. In the words of the *Dikaios Logos*, the *polis* feeds him.—Xenophon does not reply to Aristophanes directly. But the 2 main points made by Aristophanes became in a somewhat modified form the 2 points of Socrates' indictment formed[87] by Meletos, Anytos and Lykon. By refuting the indictment, Xenophon refutes then, if tacitly, Aristophanes too.

re asebeia—no *phusiologia* but only study of *tànthrōpina*—yet Socrates did

study nature in *his* manner → proof of the existence and providence of the gods (≠ the gods of the city)

re *diaphthora*—Socrates the perfect gentleman (on the *basis* of his *egkrateia*)—he even *taught kaloka'gathia* to the extent to which it *can* be taught—he did not separate wisdom and moderation from one[88] another—accordingly he was law-abiding, he even identified justice with law-abidingness—he was then a political man—the *xenikos bios* not viable—he even *taught ta politika*—in this context, he criticized the established *politeia* (election by lot)—but this was a gentlemanly view to take. Yet we are reminded of Socrates' alleged ability *ton hēttō logon kreittō poiein* by the fact that he could handle everyone in speeches in any way he liked—therefore he attracted such questionable gentlemen as Kritias and Alcibiades—but it would be very unfair to make Socrates responsible for *their* misdeeds.

Xenophon's Socrates does not always take the high road of *kalokàgathia*—but in doing so he became, not a dangerous subversion, but rather a philistine. [86]E.g. his treatment of friendship—friends are *chrēmata nē Di'*—utilitarian, economical treatment—reducing the kingly art to the economic art. Ultimately: *kalon* = *agathon* = *chrēsimon*

[86]Yet: *kalokàgathia* has more than one sense. What did Socrates understand by *kalokàgathia*? Knowledge of the *ti esti* of *tànthrōpina*—such knowledge is not possessed by the gentlemen in the common sense of the term. Xenophon dispels any possible confusion on this point by presenting to us one explicit *confrontation* of Socrates with a *kalos kàgathos* (*Oeconomicus* 11—nothing of this kind in Plato). This makes us wonder as to *the full extent of the difference between Socrates and the kaloi kàgathoi*—in a chapter of the *Memorabilia* devoted to gentlemanship (II 6.35) Xenophon's Socrates tells us what the *aretē andros* is: surpassing friends in helping them and enemies in harming them—but in speaking of Socrates' virtue Xenophon does not mention at all harming people → *andreia* does not occur in Xenophon's 2 lists of Socrates' virtues. Xenophon speaks of Socrates' exemplary conduct in campaigns but he subsumes this under Socrates' *justice* and he does not give a single example of Socrates' military prowess. Burnet, who had a very low view of Xenophon's understanding, believed that people like Xenophon *and Meno* were attracted to Socrates by his military reputation while all we know of that reputation we know through *Plato*. Socrates was then a gentleman in the sense that he *always* considered the What is? of human things. Yet Xenophon gives us very few examples of such discussions; there are many more Socratic conversations which *exhort* to virtue or dehort from vice without raising any 'What is' question than conversations dealing with *ti esti*.[89] *Xenophon points to the core of Socrates' life or thought but does not present it sufficiently or at all.*

The Xenophontic Socrates characterizes those who worry about the nature of all things as mad: some of them hold that being is only one, others that there are[90] infinitely many beings; some of them hold that all things are always in

motion, others that nothing is ever in motion; some of them hold that everything comes into being and perishes, others that nothing ever comes into being and perishes. He thus delineates the sane or sober view of the nature of all things; according to that wiser view there are many but not infinitely many beings, these beings (≠ other things) never change, never come into being and perish. As Xenophon says in an entirely different context Socrates never ceased considering what each of the beings is: the many eternal beings are the 'What is'es, the tribes (≠ the infinitely many perishable individuals). Socrates did then worry about the nature of all things and to that extent he too was mad; but *his* madness was sobriety—sobria ebrietas—There is only one occasion on which Xenophon calls Socrates "blessed": when he speaks of how Socrates acquired his friends or rather his *good* friends—he acquired them by studying with them the writings of the wise men of old and by selecting together with them the good things they found in them—but Xenophon does not give a single example of this blissful activity.—Xenophon introduces a Socratic conversation with Glaukon as follows: Socrates was well disposed to Glaukon for the sake of Charmides the son of Glaukon and for the sake of Plato. Accordingly the next chapter reports a conversation of Socrates with Charmides. We are thus induced to suspect that the next chapter will report a conversation of Socrates with *Plato*. Instead the next chapter reports a conversation of Socrates with an Ersatz for Plato, the philosopher Aristippos: the peak—the conversation with Plato—is pointed to but missing—and not because there were no such conversations.—That Book of the *Memorabilia* which comes closest to presenting the Socratic teaching as such, is introduced by the remark that Socrates did not approach all men in the same manner: he approached those who had good natures in one way and those who lacked good natures in another way; but the chief interlocutor in that Book, the chief addressee of *the* Socratic teaching presented by Xenophon, is manifestly a youth who lacked a good nature.—A last example: Socrates used 2 kinds of dialectics—one in which he led back the whole argument to its *hupothesin* and made clear that *hupothesin*; in this way the truth became manifest. In the other kind Socrates took his way through the things most generally agreed upon, through the opinions accepted by human beings; in this way he achieved, not indeed knowledge, or truth, but agreement or concord. In the second kind of speech *Odysseus* excelled; and, as the accuser of Socrates said, Socrates frequently cited the verses from the Iliad in which Odysseus is presented as speaking differently to men of worth and to worthless people.—Only by following these intimations, by linking them with one another, by thinking them through and by always remembering them—even when reading how Socrates gave good advice to a poor fellow who was near despair because 14 female relatives had taken refuge in his house and were about to starve him and themselves to death—only by always remembering Xenophon's intimations, I say, can one come to see the *true* Socrates as Xenophon saw him. For Xenophon presents Socrates also and primarily as innocent

and even helpful to the meanest capacities. He conceals the difference between Socratic and ordinary *kalokàgathia* as much as possible, i.e. as much as is compatible with intimating their conflict.

[86]Nothing is more characteristic of gentlemen than respect for the law—for the right kind of law; or, if you wish, the wrong kind is not law at all. It is therefore necessary to raise the question *ti esti nomos*; but this question is never raised by Xenophon's Socrates; it is raised only by Alcibiades, a youth of extreme audacity and even *hubris* who by raising that question discomfited no less a man than the great Perikles. Socrates' failure to raise that question showed how good a citizen he was. For laws depend on the regime, but a good citizen is a man who obeys the law independently of all changes of regimes. But, according to a more profound view, "good citizen" is relative to the regime: a good citizen under a democracy will be a bad citizen under an oligarchy. Given this complication, it is prudent *not* to raise the question 'what is law.' But, alas, Alcibiades who did raise that question was a companion of Socrates at the time he raised it, and the way in which he handled it reveals his Socratic training. Xenophon almost openly admits that Socrates subverted paternal authority. As for incest, Xenophon's Socrates asserts that incest is forbidden by divine law, for incest between parents and children is automatically punished by the defective character of the offspring, good offspring coming only from parents who are both in their prime. The Socratic argument is silent on incest between brother and sister. Above all, the punishment for incest between parents and children does not differ from the "punishment" that is visited on an oldish husband who marries a young wife. On this point the Xenophontic Socrates comes very close to the Socrates of the *Clouds*.

[86]The Socrates of the *Clouds* teaches the omnipotence of rhetoric, but this teaching is refuted by the action of the play. The Xenophontic Socrates could handle everyone as he liked in speeches—this means that he could not handle everyone as he liked in *deeds*. The greatest example is Xanthippe, to say nothing of his accusers. But the Xenophontic Socrates ($\neq$ the Socrates of the *Clouds*) is *aware* of the essential limitation of speech. Xenophon indicates this also as follows. His comrade-in-arms Proxenos was able to rule gentlemen but not the others who regarded him as naive; he was unable to instil the general run of soldiers with fear; he was unable to inflict punishment; he was a pupil of Gorgias. Xenophon, however, the pupil of Socrates, was able to rule both gentlemen and non-gentlemen; he was good at doing as well as at speaking.

[86]From Aristotle we learn that the sophists identified or almost identified the political art with rhetoric. Socrates, we infer, was opposed to the sophists also and especially because he was aware of the essential limitations of rhetoric. In this important respect, incidentally, Machiavelli had nothing in common with the sophists but agreed with Socrates; he continued, modified, corrupted the Socratic tradition; he was linked to that tradition through Xenophon to whom he refers more frequently than to Plato, Aristotle and Cicero taken together.

This is an additional reason why one should pay greater attention to Xenophon than one ordinarily does.

This lecture consists of 2 heterogenous parts—they are held together apparently only by the title "The problem of Socrates," which is necessarily ambiguous: the problem of Socrates is philosophic and it is historical. The *distinction* between philosophic and historical cannot be avoided, but distinction is not total *separation*: one cannot study the philosophic problem without having made up one's mind on the historical problem and one cannot study the historical problem without having made up one's mind implicitly on the philosophic problem.

NOTES

1. The manuscript contains the following sentences instead of these bracketed ones: "Why should we be interested in it? Why should it be relevant to us? There are so many things that concern us so much more obviously and urgently than the problem of Socrates. We receive an answer by listening to the man from whom I took the title of my lecture and who, as far as I remember, coined the expression 'the problem of Socrates.'"
2. Word omitted in the lecture as delivered.
3. "disintegrated" is written instead of "were disintegrating" in the manuscript.
4. "is" replaces "was" in the lecture as delivered.
5. "pre-Socratics" replaces "pre-Socratic philosophers" in the lecture as delivered.
6. The word in the text was originally "fullest"; "est" has been crossed out.
7. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following words, which are written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript: "anti-Hegel, Schopenhauer." (The word which we have interpreted as "anti-" is difficult to read, and perhaps we are in error about it.) These words are not present in the lecture as delivered.
8. "His" is written instead of "Nietzsche's" in the manuscript.
9. "man has ever achieved" is written instead of "has ever been achieved" in the manuscript.
10. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following phrase, which is written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript: "i.e. collective egoism of the human race (utilitarianism)". This phrase is not present in the lecture as delivered.
11. The words "on acts, on the will," replace "on acts of the will" in the lecture as delivered.
12. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following sentence, which is written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript. "Science cannot answer the question 'why science': it rests on an *ir*rational foundation." This sentence is not present in the lecture as delivered.
13. "he" is written instead of "Socrates" in the manuscript.
14. The word "there," which has been added above the line, is omitted in the lecture as delivered.
15. "*Banquet*" replaces "*Symposium*" in the lecture as delivered.
16. The words "a few" added above the line to replace "one" which has been crossed out. In keeping with this addition, the word "points" has been made plural by the addition of the final "s". Also, the manuscript contains here the following sentence, which has been crossed out (see, however, the end of the paragraph): "In the Preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, when taking issue with Plato and therewith with Socrates, Nietzsche says as it were in passing 'Christianity is Platonism for the people.'"
17. "spends" is [inadvertently] written instead of "sends" in the manuscript.
18. "the" replaces "his" in the lecture as delivered.
19. "it is" added above the line.
20. "it" replaces "this" in the lecture as delivered.

21. "Nietzsche's" added above the line to replace "the" which has been crossed out. In the lecture as delivered, however, the reading is again "the."
22. "the" is written instead of "all" in the manuscript.
23. "Probably." is written instead of "Perhaps." in the manuscript.
24. "a truism for many people" replaces "for many people a truism" in the lecture as delivered.
25. "supplied" is written instead of "suggested" in the manuscript.
26. "an" is written instead of "a simple" in the manuscript.
27. "inaccessible e.g. to original Hebrew or Arabic thought:" is written instead of "inexpressible in original Hebrew or Arabic:" in the manuscript. Also, the word "original" in the manuscript is added only above the line.
28. The remainder of this paragraph is omitted in the lecture as delivered. The tape contains here a pause of about fifteen seconds during which the only sound is that of shuffling pages.
29. At the end of the preceding paragraph, the manuscript has the marginal notation "turn to sheet 8" (in Professor Strauss's own hand). Accordingly, the editors have chosen to omit, for the time being, a large portion of the lecture and to continue instead from the beginning of sheet 8. At the end of sheet 10 of the manuscript, there is another marginal notation, "*Continue* 4b." That notation points back to the present one, on sheet 4b, and thus also to the omitted portion of the text. This omitted portion, which we will return to as directed by that later notation, continues to what appears to be the end of the lecture. Our editorial procedure is further justified by the fact that the lecture as delivered in Annapolis continues here in the manner that we are presenting it (i.e. from sheet 8 of the manuscript). Since the tape breaks off before the occurrence of the second marginal notation, however, we cannot be certain how much, if any, of the omitted section was included in Professor Strauss's oral presentation. (A subsequent note will indicate where the tape breaks off.)
30. This sentence is omitted from the lecture as delivered and replaced by the two following sentences: "We have to pay some attention to this question of historicism, that is to say of history in the first place. The anti-Socratic position, which I have tried to delineate, is not unproblematic."
31. The sentence "Xenophon's *Hellenica* begins abruptly with 'Thereafter'—thus Xenophon cannot indicate what the intention of his work is." is written instead of these four bracketed sentences in the manuscript.
32. The words "(the *Symposium*)" are omitted in the lecture as delivered, and the words "we infer" are also omitted and replaced by "one can infer."
33. The words "in it." are written instead of "to history," in the manuscript. Also, instead of the words "and are appropriately treated by Xenophon in excursuses." the manuscript contains the words "belong in excursuses" above the line.
34. "this work" replaces "the *Hellenica*" in the lecture as delivered.
35. The phrase "as far as possible" is omitted in the lecture as delivered. Instead, the next occurrence of the word "Thereafter" is followed by the phrase "within the limits of the possible."
36. "considering the 'What is' of the human things, these 'What is'es being unchangeable," is written instead of these bracketed words in the manuscript.
37. "Xenophon's" replaces "the" in the lecture as delivered.
38. "(≠ economic historian, art historian . . .)" is written instead of these bracketed words in the manuscript.
39. "yet his" is written instead of "but Vico's" in the manuscript.
40. "classical" is written instead of "Greek" in the manuscript.
41. "*technai* (including *chrēmatistikē* and *mimētikē*)" is written instead of these bracketed words in the manuscript.
42. "*doxai*" is written instead of "opinions" in the manuscript.
43. The words "Their objects" added above the line to replace "They" which has been crossed out. In the lecture as delivered, however, the word "They" is the one used.
44. "of things owing their being to being *held*" added at the bottom of the page in the manuscript. A notation above the line directs us to insert this phrase here, and it is included here in the lecture as delivered.
45. "teaching" is written instead of "doctrine" in the manuscript.
46. "the classical" is written instead of "this earlier" in the manuscript.

47. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following words, which are written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript: "das Gewachsene ≠ das Gemachte." These words are not present in the lecture as delivered.
48. These last few lines, beginning with the words "Heidegger tries," are omitted from the lecture as delivered.
49. "nature" replaces "*phusis*" in the lecture as delivered.
50. "purely" added above the line.
51. "philosophers" added above the line to replace "men" which has been crossed out.
52. "what is probably" omitted from the lecture as delivered.
53. "→ we" is written instead of "and he" in the manuscript.
54. "understands or understood" is written instead of "understood or understands" in the manuscript.
55. "we necessarily understand" is written instead of "he necessarily understands" in the manuscript.
56. "understood" is written instead of "understands" in the manuscript.
57. "them" is written instead of "the earlier philosophers" in the manuscript.
58. "it" is written instead of "historicism" in the manuscript.
59. "f(times or periods)" is written instead of "functions of times or periods" in the manuscript.
60. This entire parenthesis is omitted from the lecture as delivered.
61. This sentence begins with the word "Yet" in the manuscript.
62. "it" is written instead of "the human race" in the manuscript.
63. "the knowledge that the human race had an *origin*" added at the bottom of the page in the manuscript. A notation above the line directs us to insert this phrase here, and it is included here in the lecture as delivered.
64. "is this not the basis" replaces "if not *the* basis" in the lecture as delivered.
65. Professor Strauss indicates by a marginal notation that the following section of the text, which includes over four paragraphs, written on two separate sheets, belongs here. This section also occurs here in the lecture as delivered. It replaces the following sentences, which have been crossed out. "*The* ground of all beings, and especially of man, is Sein—this ground of grounds is coeval with man and therefore also not eternal or sempiternal. But if this is so, Sein cannot be the complete ground of man: the *emergence* of man (≠ the *essence* of man) requires a ground different from Sein. Sein is not the ground of the *That*. To this one can reply as follows: the That of man or its condition is necessarily *interpreted* in the light of a specific understanding of Sein—of understanding which is given or sent by Sein." A subsequent note will indicate the end of this interpolated section.
66. This entire parenthesis is omitted from the lecture as delivered. Also, Professor Strauss is probably using the word "insistence" here in its older, and Latinate, sense of "standing or resting upon."
67. "is resoluteness, i.e. the awareness-acceptance of a" is written instead of these bracketed words in the manuscript.
68. "not" is inadvertently omitted from the lecture as delivered.
69. "sempiternal or eternal" replaces "eternal or sempiternal" in the lecture as delivered.
70. "requires" is written instead of "would require" in the manuscript.
71. "by" added by the editors to replace "of" in the manuscript and in the lecture as delivered.
72. This is the end of the interpolated section which was mentioned in note 65.
73. "is" is written instead of "in this view are" in the manuscript.
74. "*aidion*" is written instead of "sempiternal" in the manuscript.
75. "mentions this reply" replaces "also replies as follows" in the lecture as delivered.
76. "has no place for" added above the line to replace "denies" which has been crossed out.
77. The symbol "→" followed by "ex nihilo et ab nihilo omne ens fit." is written instead of this sentence in the manuscript. Also, the words "qua ens" are written, but then crossed out, after the words "omne ens."
78. A notation above the line directs us to insert here the following words, which are written at the bottom of the page in the manuscript: "Grundsatz der Beharrlichkeit der Substanz." These words are not present in the lecture as delivered.